

SUFFERN

# Downtown trees offer canopy of memories

Towering reminders of events and friends help village blossom

James Walsh  
The Journal News

They might look like trees, but they're mostly reminders of times and people past.

There's the red maple at Avon Park, for instance, just off Lafayette Avenue.

For Carmella Gattuso and her daughter, Connie Murray, it lives and grows just like a family business, Gattuso Brothers Market, which thrived in the village for 44 years.

The tree stands as a memorial to Patsy, Angelo, Mike and Sam Gattuso, who opened the market in the days of three-digit telephone numbers.

"We were born and raised here," said Carmella Gattuso, widow of Angelo. "A lot of memories are here. I belong to the seniors (club), and we meet right across from where the store was. We often talk about it."

The first Memory Tree was planted in Suffern in 2003, and eight others followed in 2004 in a program run by Sheila Rees Foster and Sandy Calliano Stead for the Suffern Civic Association.

A dual purpose was seen by Foster and Stead. As the village was fixing up the downtown with new sidewalks and lighting, they thought, why not add a bit of nature to the concrete and metal mix?

"We felt it would be nice if the community could be part of the revitalization, and we also noticed that trees were dying," Foster said.

Assisted by the Cornell Cooperative Extension, they chose

### To learn more

Contact Village of Suffern (845) 357-2600, or visit [www.suffernvillage.com](http://www.suffernvillage.com)

species of trees and locations suited for them.

The vest-pocket park at Lafayette and Orange avenues, for example, is the site of two Kwanzan cherry trees, with room for one more.

Ornamental pear trees and maples have been planted along Lafayette Avenue. A couple of cherry trees are to be planted at Chestnut Street Park.

"Maggie lived with us for a couple of years, and it reminds me of when she was here," Jim Quinn said of a tree planted in memory of his sister, Margaret, a Dominican nun for more than 30 years.

Quinn and his wife, Holly, planted the tree off Washington Avenue, near the Lafayette Avenue corner across from Sacred Heart Church.

"It reminds me of her," Quinn said of the tree, "the proximity of the church and our living on Washington Avenue."

Another tree shading a bit of the downtown was planted by the Magurno and Colbath families to keep alive the memory of village barbers Bill and Gene Magurno.

And the Calliano family plans to plant a tree off Chestnut Street in memory of Stead's father, Lou Calliano, who ran Suffern Rec, a bowling alley on Chestnut Street. Those were the days before machines replaced pin boys.

There's no rule, though, that trees can only be memorials. Village Trustee Thom Velto, for example, planted one after the birth of his twin grandchildren.

So villagers, former residents or organizations are invited to con-



Vincent DiSalvio/The Journal News

Suffern residents Sandy Calliano Stead, left, and Sheila Rees Foster, co-chairwomen of the Suffern Civic Association Memory Tree Committee, admire the spring flowers on a Kwanzan cherry tree yesterday. The tree, planted in 2003, was dedicated in memory of Diane Damon Morang by her family and the Suffern Civic Association.

tact the Suffern Civic Association if they would like to commemorate a person, or perhaps an event, with a tree.

"Having grown up in Suffern, Murray said, "it's nice to know there's something left of the past.

The family business might be gone, the people might be gone, but something remains."